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OPM-4-1-SR




FBIS

FOREIGN BROADCAST INFORMATION SERVICE

Office of the Director

15 June 1988

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NOTE FOR:

[Redacted]

Media Chief, Public Affairs Office

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FROM:

[Redacted]

Deputy Director, Foreign Broadcast
Information Service

SUBJECT: Backgrounder on FBIS

REFERENCE: Your Note, dtd 13 Jun, Same Subject

[Redacted]

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I hope the attachment meets with your approval and satisfies the curiosity of Henry Gottlieb of AP. As we discussed on the phone, any information on how we actually do our business and on our budget is not to be passed to any outside requester. As for Gottlieb's last question, I feel that it would be best for him to ask that question of our consumers. If you know how he plans to use this information, and, when, I would appreciate an alert.

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[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Deputy Director

Attachment

FBIS Backgrounder

(This is NOT a press release)

The U.S. Government's monitoring service will observe its 50th anniversary in three years.

President Franklin Roosevelt authorized its establishment early in 1941, prior to the U.S. entry into World War II. The step reflected Washington's concern over the content of propaganda broadcasts emanating from certain regime radios in Europe and Asia. The use of short-wave broadcasting in an effort to influence distant peoples was a relatively new development in international affairs.

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The service was established within the Federal Communications Commission, which already had radio technicians and monitoring facilities for its domestic regulatory activities. The FCC hired

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to organize the service in Washington, D.C. In June 1941, it hired Dr. Lloyd A. Free, editor of Public Opinion Quarterly, as first director of the service. First called Foreign Broadcast Monitoring Service, it has been known as Foreign Broadcast Information Service since 1946.

In the governmental reorganizations following World War II, the information gathering service was transferred into the new national intelligence establishment, which had not existed in 1941.

Today, FBIS monitors selected foreign public information media--mainly radio and television news and public affairs broadcast, news agency transmissions, and publications--and supplies translations and transcripts to all interested agencies of the government. FBIS does not sell or otherwise directly disseminate foreign media information to the public.

The monitoring is performed at facilities in the United States and abroad by locally hired linguists and technicians supervised by FBIS staff personnel. FBIS publications are produced by staff foreign media specialists in the Washington metropolitan area. The publications include eight daily regional and numerous topical reports that are distributed to requesting U.S. Government offices. They contain political, economic, military, sociological, scientific, and technical news and commentary from foreign public information outlets. In addition, FBIS reports to government consumers important breaking news, for example on a foreign leader's speech or an earthquake, on a 24-hour wire service.

The published reports are available to the public by subscription through the National Technical Information Service of the U.S. Department of Commerce (5285 Port Royal Road, Springfield, Virginia 22162, Tel. (703) 487-4630). The Library of Congress in Washington D.C., and many Federal Depository Libraries elsewhere in the United States file FBIS publications for public reference. Copies also may be seen at many public and university libraries.

(For recent U.S. article on FBIS, see The Atlantic, February 1988, page 34, "Media Verite" The Inside Story on the Whole World." For earlier article, see "Inside Line on the Overseas Action," by Lynn Rosellini, New York Times, 8 October 1982.)